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Mr. STEPHENS'S  
**SERMON**

P R E A C H E D

Before the Honourable  
House of Commons,

*January 30. 1700.*

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MR STEPHENS

# SERMON

PREACHED

Before the Honorable

House of Commons

January 30. 1788

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A  
S E R M O N  
P R E A C H ' D

Before the Honourable  
House of COMMONS,

January 30. 1744.

Being an Anniversary  
for the



By WILLIAM STEPHENS, B. D.  
Rector of Sutton in Surry.

L O N D O N,

Printed: And are to be Sold by A. Baldwin,  
at the Oxford-Arms in Warwick-  
Lane. MDCC.

STERNON

THE

Before the Honorable

Houses of Commons

STERNON

STERNON



## TITUS III.

*Put them in mind to be subject to  
Principalities and Powers, to ob-  
bey Magistrates; and to be ready  
to every good Work.*

**T**O understand the Reason of this, and  
such-like Admonitions, which fre-  
quently occur in the Apostles' Writ-  
tings, Two Things may be premised;

I. That about the Time of our Saviour  
Christ, there arose one *Tiberius* of *Cæsar* (who  
is mentioned *Mat. 22. 17.*) preaching Seditious  
Doctrines to the People, and teaching, (as  
*St. Jerom* in his Comment on my Text ob-  
serves,) That they ought to own no Sovereign  
Prince, but God alone: And if they paid  
their Tithes to the Priest, they were discharged  
from paying Tribute to the Emperor. And  
upon this Account it was (as *St. Jerom* believ-  
ed) that the *Pharisees* ask'd our Saviour that  
expious Question, *Is it lawful to give Tribute to  
Cæsar, or not?* *Matth. 22. 17.* Now to this

6 *A Sermon preached before the*

A ccount *Anastafius Nicenus* adds, That the Followers of this *Judas* were very numerous, and called by the Name of *Galileans*, and commonly looked upon as Men ill affected to the Roman Government: Particularly, because, when they offered Sacrifice, they refused to make Supplication for the Emperor and People of *Rome*; upon which Account it is thought that *Pilate*, the Roman Deputy of *Judea*, came upon them while they were sacrificing, and putting them to the sword, mingled their blood with the blood of the sacrifices; as you may read, *Luke* 13:31-35

And from hence it was, that our Saviour Christ and his Disciples were suspected of favouring Seditious Doctrines, because they came out of *Galilee*, as is observed by *St. Chrysostom*, in his 23d *Homily on the Romans*; wherein he saith, That great Reports were spread abroad, as if the Disciples were a Factious, Seditious People, and designing against the Government: It must also be confessed, that many of the *Jews*, who were converted to the Christian Faith, were not sufficiently respectful to the higher Powers which God's Providence had set over them: For which *Mr. Calvin* gives this Reason, Since the Powers that were then in being opposed themselves to our Saviour Christ, they thought them unworthy of Respect and Honour.

Now what hath been said concerning the *Galilean* Persecution, shews the Reason why the Apostles do so frequently in their Letters direct

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rest the Christian Churches to Loyalty, or a  
due Submission to Magistrates.

1. To clear themselves from the false and  
scandalous Imputation of having imbib'd the  
Doctrine of *Judas the Galilean*. And,

2. To undeceive all those that had been per-  
verted by that seditious Doctrine.

II. The Second Thing I would premise, is,  
That about the Time when *St. Paul* wrote this  
Epistle, the People of *Cyrene* (which was *Titus*  
his Diocess) were unruly and mutinous. *Gre-  
gorius* says, That they were always a factions Peo-  
ple; and for that Reason *St. Paul* wrote to *Ti-  
tus*, their Bishop, to put them in mind to be sub-  
ject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magis-  
trates, and to be ready to every good Work.

I. I shall take Occasion from hence, First, To  
make a just Comment upon the Text.

II. To set forth the Reasons and Grounds  
upon which the Apostles founded their Do-  
ctrine of Obedience to Civil Magistrates. And,

III. To apply these Reasons in Conjunction  
with the Occasion of this Day's Humiliation.  
And,

I. First, It may be observed, That *St. Paul*  
does not direct *Titus* to teach the Doctrine of  
Civil Obedience as a new Thing, but only to  
refresh their Memories therewith, to put them

in mind, for Men cannot be supposed ignorant of the absolute Necessity of Government, to the Defence and Support of Society; which were, in effect, to suppose, that 'twere better to lead the Lives of Beasts than Men, and that the World were willing to lie under the continual Calamity of War and Oppression, fill'd only with a Rout of Fools and Madmen. 'Twere to suppose every single Person willing to expose himself to the uncontrol'd World, and bid defiance to the unbounded Power, Rage, and Malice of Mankind. We cannot but see our selves linked together by Common Wants into Publick Societies, and these Societies cannot subsist, unless they are upheld by the Power of Government, whose Wisdom and Justice must appear by a due Administration of good Laws: And from hence we cannot but see a Necessity of *Principalities and Powers*, and of Superior and Inferior *Magistrates*, without whom Laws can be neither made nor executed. From whence 'tis very visible, that Subjection to a good Government is as much our Interest as it is our Duty. This was evident to the *Sabaothean* Sect of old, who would not suffer the Blood of any Creature to be shed for their use, but yet allow'd the Sword of the Magistrate to cut off Malefactors.

The following Words in my Text, are, *Principalities and Powers*. Now the Word in the Original signifying something which is Prime and Principal, must denote the Supreme Establish'd Power, from whence inferior Authorities are derived, and is the same with the *higher Powers* mentioned Rom. xiii. 1. *The cause*

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cause Seamus speaks of *Principatus* and *Potestas* in the *Phædri* Number; his likely that he alludes to the Distinction (which was in common among the *Romans*) of the greater and lesser Powers, the former of which, during the Commonwealth, were the Consuls, *Prætors*, and *Censors*; all which Powers, in *St. Paul's* Time, were vested in the Emperor, and made up the Imperial Dignity. The lesser Powers were all those derived from *Senatus*, and were subordinate hereunto. And this Distinction was so nicely observ'd among the *Romans*, that *Julius Caesar* punished a *Tribune*, because he suffered himself to be stiled one of the higher Powers. *Sueton.*

But in the Text it must be observ'd, that our Obedience becomes due, not only to the Supreme, but Inferior Authorities; for the *Cretans*, to whom *Titus* preached the Gospel, were part of a *Roman* Province, governed by inferior Officers, deputed from *Rome*, who were the Magistrates they were exhorted to obey. For tho' the superior and inferior Powers differ greatly, if compared among themselves; yet, with respect to the Subjects Obedience, they are to be regarded alike; so that we cannot wilfully disobey the Inferior, without affronting the Sovereign Authority. If then the *Cretans* would obey the Emperor, it must be by Submission to the Ordinances and Officers which he had appointed to their Island; and if they behaved themselves faithfully to these Magistrates, they discharged their Duty to the Imperial Power which deputed them.

We



We see that a large Family cannot be governed by the Personal Presence of the Master, much less can an Empire, so that there will be need to call in, to the Prince's Assistance, such Persons into whom he may diffuse some measure of his Political Skill, and thereby unite them as Members to his own Body Politick: whereupon they are to be treated as the Hands, Arms, and Eyes of Majesty: And hence *thus* admonish'd them, not only to be subject to Principalities and Powers, but to obey Magistrates.

II. The Second Thing I proposed to speak to, were the Reasons upon which the Apostles grounded their Doctrine of Civil Obedience; which are Two: The one is given by St. Paul, who teaches, That every Soul should be subject to the higher Powers, because the Magistrate is the Minister of God to us for good, *Rom. 13. 1, 4.* The Second Reason is given by St. Peter, (*viz.*) Because all Governments and Governors do arise from our own Consent; *Submit your selves* (saith he) *to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King as supreme, &c.* Where note, That the King is called the Ordinance, or Creature of Man, because the Sovereign Power it self is vested in Men, according to humane Compact: And from hence our Subjection is urg'd by St. Peter, *1 Epist. 2 Chap. 13 Ver.*

1. To begin with St. Paul's Argument, who calls Magistracy a Divine Ordinance, because of the excellent Use of it, whereby good Magistrates resemble the Divine Power, Wisdom and Goodness, in securing to all Men their Rights



Rights And Properties, in preserving the Peace, Health, and Safety of Societies, both with Respect to Body and Soul. But to be more particular, *1<sup>st</sup>* The preservation of Property was the

first benefit for which Magistracy was designed. Now Property is originally attained by the Labour of either Body or Mind: first supposing the Earth to have been common to all first Inhabitants. It will follow that whoever took the Pains to cultivate any part of it and lay up necessary stores for his use, had by this his Industry made himself the true Proprietor thereof. And could we suppose this new Proprietor to be as well guarded, as that Man we read of in the Gospel, who was well Armed, and kept his Palace and Goods in Peace, yet it may likewise be supposed (as it there follows) that if a stronger than he shall come upon him, he will take from him all his Armour wherein he trusted, and divide his Spoils. And this uncertain condition of Property shows the reason of Mens uniting into Societies, and setting up forms of Government: which is for mutual Defence and Preservation of Property: and that, not only for the benefit of the present Possessors, but of future Generations. So that what becomes a Man's own, either by Labour, Gift or Purchase may with safety be enjoyed by himself, and also conveyed down to Posterity.

*2<sup>d</sup>* Life and Limbs are ours by the gift of God. And these Properties are liable to be invaded and destroyed: Tho they cannot (like other Goods) be transfer'd to the use of the Spoiler.

Spoiler. And since there is so much Variance and Malice, Pride and Grife among Mankind, what ill Offices may not one Man apprehend from another? But when destructive Malice, a Friend of Hell shall Transform it self into an Angel of Light, and perswade Men that they are then infused with the Spirit of God when they are possessed by the *Apollyon* the great Enemy and Destroyer of Mankind, when under the pretence of Religion it self Men shall exert their sharpest Malice not only against the Possessions and Liberties but even against the Lives of one another, how great need is there of the Magistrates interposing Power to disarm them of their Spiritual as well as Carnal Weapons of warfare? to take away the Ball of Contagion from among them, and the power of evil doing from all contending Parties. And,

3. In this the Magistrate is God's Minister to us for good, not only with respect to the preservation of our Liberties and Lives from destruction, but of our Souls from Sin; for whilst this just Liberty, this natural right of worshipping God according to that knowledge hath given us, is supported by Law, no Man is forced into hypocritical compliances contrary to the direction of his Conscience, but every one may worship the one true God in singleness of heart, whereas on the other hand if in Matters of Religion, Force be suffered to take the Place of Reason, all Religions will be alike, (as Colours in the Dark) undistinguishable.

And altho the Magistrates can bestow no Divine Grace upon the Souls of Men, yet whilst

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whilst by punishing Vice, Immoral Practices are restrained, he prevents the overflowing of sin in a Land. And if ceasing to do evil, be one step towards learning to do well, whilst the Civil Powers restrain us from iniquities, they turn us out of the broad way of Perdition into the Paths of Righteousness and Peace.

From hence then it appears that they who are wanting in their Submission and Assistance to the Civil Ministry of God, are false to their own interest as well as that of their Posterity. Whereas on the other hand he who is ready to every good work which may support this Divine Ministry to us for good, will be sure in the performance of his Duty to find his Account.

Let us then take a view of our Goods and Chattels, Houses and Lands, Wives and Children; let us consider the Blessings of Health Safety and Liberties: Let us think how to preserve our Lives from Destruction, our Souls from Sin: whether we Eat, or Drink, or Sleep, or Wake, or what ever we do with Comfort or Safety, we hereby discover our continual Obligation to the good Magistrates Care over us, whereby we are put in mind to be Subject, &c.

2. The other Reason of Submission given by *St. Peter*, is, Because all Governments and Governours arise from the Peoples Consent. They are the Ordinances and Appointments of men, the Creatures of human Compact. For we do not find that God did appoint any form of Political Government, for a Pattern to be follow'd by any Society now in being upon the Earth.

Earth. We see no such Rule in the Book of Nature; nor do we read in Scripture of any particular Policy prescribed to all, or any People, now Imbedded in the World. We read there, That all Governments and Governors are appointed by God's Providence; by *me Kings Reys, &c.* but we find no Particular Administration, no Particular Family, or Single Person, now in being, ordained to Government by Divine Precept; but each Magistracy and Magistracy is left to the Ordinance and Appointment of those Men who have joined themselves together in Society.

The great Variety we see in Civil Governments, shews, that they are all the Effects of humane Contrivance, and suited to the Several Interests of the Respective Societies: Thus the Ancient Charter of the neighbouring City, Containing all those useful and necessary Powers, by which so great a Body is governed, was it not the wise Contrivance of their Ancestors? And did it not receive its Establishment from the Principalities and Powers of the Realm? And the Great Charter of the Realm it self is no more then the wise Ordinance of our Forefathers? and the Dates of its Royal Confirmations are still remaining among us. And as several smaller Societies have their free Customs distinct from one another; so in different Nations there are various Lodgments even of the Sovereign Power, which appear to be the Effects of Free-will: because in every rational Government something may be observed which is peculiar and distinguishing.

Furthermore have we not seen the forms of Govern-

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Government even in the same Nations changed from what they formerly had been? As in Sweden, France, and Denmark. And have not our eyes beheld of late Years the Legal Forms of the *English* Monarchy degenerated into Tyranny, and again recovered, through God's Blessing together with the Courage and Conduct of the Man of his own Right Hand, who by Restoring our Ancient Liberties, justly recommended himself to the Imperial Crown of his Realm by the Free Consent of the People.

Now was it otherwise of old, when *Moses* was by Meekness and Miracle recommended of God to be the Father of his Country. For tho by a Divine Power he wrought out Deliverance from *Egypt* by Conducting them into the Wilderness, yet there was no Form of Government established among the Tribes till *Jeitro* made a Visit to his Son in Law *Moses*, to whose Counsel it was owing that a sound Polity was set up in the Land of *Israel*. For instead of the whole burden of the Government lying upon *Moses*, which *Jeitro* told him was not good, he directs him to provide out of all the People able men, such as fear God, Men of truth, hating Covetousness, and place such over them to be Rulers over Thousands, Rulers of Hundreds, Rulers of Fifties and Rulers of Tens: And let them Judge the People at all seasons. And it shall be (saith *Jeitro*) that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: *Exod. 18. 17, 21, 22.* Thus the burden of the Civil Government should sit easie upon the Governors, and the People should receive a quick dispatch of their Affairs.

*Moses*



*Moses* (as you read) follows this advice, and joins himself with the Tribes of *Israel* in the choice of Persons fit for that Administration: as will appear by comparing the 1. *verse* of the forecited Chapter of *Deut.* In the former *verse* we read that *Moses* chose able Men out of *Israel* and made them Heads over the People. But the latter place shows that the Peoples Consent was had in the election of these Officers. For as *Moses* Repeats the Circumstances of that Action, *Deut.* 1. 9. &c. And I spake unto you at that time saying, I am not able to bare you my self alone, &c. take ye therefore wise Men and understanding, and known among your Tribes, and I will make them Rulers over you. From hence it appears.

1. That the Old Constitution of *Israel's* Government, was the Contrivance of *Jethro* an *Hebrew*, and the Magistrates who were in the Administration were chosen by the joint Consent of *Moses*, and the People. And

2. That no one Person, tho never so able, so Wise, and Valiant as *Moses*, is sufficient to Govern a Nation without the Advice and joint Assistance of Inferiour Magistrates. Much less such a Man who hath no pretence to the Spirit and Character of this Divine Legislator.

It has been thought by some, that a great Conqueror might form a Civil Government in a conquer'd Nation, without the Consent of the People by the sole Power of his own Will. And suppose it were so, then that Government, would be an Humane Ordinance, because the Conqueror is but a Man. But I deny it to be possible for any Conqueror, tho never so great,



to make himself a King over any People without their Consent. For to let pass what our Histories tell us of the Capitulations which follow'd the respective Conquest of the Saxons, Danes, and Normans, before they erected any Form of Government in this Land. Let us suppose that a Great General, with a powerful Foreign Army, should so far over-run a Nation that the People thereof could not be able to make any considerable Resistance; in such a Case the Relations of Lord and Slave, are actually introduc'd by the Conquest. The Conquerors are *Lords* and the Native *Slaves*; But then this State is a State of War still, but no Political or Civil Constitution. The Absolute Lord, and his Slave are as yet, upon no civil Terms with one another, no Obligations have as yet pass'd between them, but they are both left to their own Wills; and if the Lord may take away the Life of his Slave, the Slave is under no Obligation of dealing otherwise with his Lord. So that if this Great General intends to rule in Peace over the Conquer'd People he will find himself constrained to enter into some Terms of Compact with them, upon which they are willing to accept him for the Head of their Government, and Oblige themselves to obey him. But put the Case that a Nation, to avoid present Destruction, would Consent to make themselves Legal Slaves, this can no more oblige them than an honest Man is bound to keep Promise with a barbarous Highway-man; for iniquity cannot be established by a Law, much less can it bind Posterity, whose Lives and Liberties they had no Right

18 *A Sermon Preach'd before the*  
Right to dispose. And Consequently, they  
may justly restore themselves to a State of Free-  
dom when ever they are able.

And if a mighty Conqueror cannot attain a  
Civil Power over a Conquer'd People without  
their Consent, how shall he obtain it over his  
own Conquering Nation, without their free  
Concurrence? Did this Victorious People leave  
their Native Country, with all the Liberties they  
enjoy'd therein, to follow their Chief into a  
Foreign Land, wherein they hoped to find a  
better Settlement for themselves and Posterity;  
would they indure all the Hardships of War,  
and by their Sweat and Blood purchase an in-  
tire Conquest that they might be reduced to the  
miserable Condition of the Conquer'd People?  
that is, to become Slaves to their General. I  
allow, that this Chief may be the help of his own  
People, make himself own'd by the Conquer'd  
upon advantageous Terms. But by what in-  
visible power shall he gain to be (I will not say  
absolute Master but even) the Civil Head over  
his new settled Colony? It can be nothing else  
but their own free Consent which can invest  
him with a Political Headship over them. And  
then, how great Reason have they to Pay a due  
Submission to that Ordinance which themselves  
have made and to submit to Principalities and  
Powers which were their own Appointment,  
and for their own Benefit?

III. Having thus set forth the Apostolical  
Grounds of Civil Obedience I crave leave to  
make some improvement of them: First By  
way

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way of General Application, for to insist on the dismal Effects of this Days Tragedy (with which you have been Annually acquainted all your Lives) would be superfluous Labour. And therefore I shall rather endeavour to offer *some Cautions which may probably prevent the like Mischiefs for the future.* But,

1<sup>st</sup>. The Apostolical Reasons of Obedience being duly consider'd, may serve to allay the Fears and Jealousy's of some Good Men, who have conceived, that a National Government hath not so sure a Foundation as is necessary, if it be only bottom'd upon Humane Compact: Because mens minds being subject to frequent Alterations, all Governments will, as they think, be very unsteady.

And it must be acknowledged, that in all dubious Matters, wherein the Judgment cannot come to a Determination, the minds of Men will be unsettled. So likewise in smaller matters, scarce worthy of serious Deliberation, men will act differently. Nay, in matters of Moment, some Men may suffer themselves to be Carry'd away by unaccountable Capricio's; but yet none of these things can any ways endanger a Constitution settled upon the Foundations before mentioned.

1<sup>st</sup>. Because a Good Government is a matter of so necessary Importance, that no Man in his Wits can doubt whether he shall Concur to its Support or not. And,

2<sup>dy</sup>. The Compact by which all Governours are introduced, is evermore Solemn and Deliberate: and attended with the strongest tie to the Sovereign Power by which tis possible for a Man to ratify the Solemn Obligations he has contracted. For such a Bond is, *the Oath of the Lord*, by which the Allegiance of the Subject is confirmed. And if a deliberate Compact freely enter'd into upon the wisest and strongest Motives of Advantage, confirm'd by solemn Oaths and Promises, be not a sufficient Establishment, 'tis hard to say what is such. And notwithstanding some Men may suffer themselves to be carry'd away from a useful and necessary Establishment by reasonings contrary to the General stream of a Nation, it cannot be presum'd that the Number and Abilities of such Men well ever be sufficient to unhinge any tolerable Administration of a Government thus Established.

Indeed, Nothing but an Absolute Necessity, and such as is visible in an extraordinary manner, will be effectual to work a change in any settled Constitution, such a one as renders Mankind fully satisfied without the least remaining scruple that the Government then in being is not the Ordinance of God to them for Good.

2. From what hath been said it also appears, that no Man's pretence to the Membership of any pure Apostolick Church, can excuse, much less warrant his disaffection to that Government which Gods Providence and Mans Consent have set over a People for their Good.

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I speak this to take away that Scandal which some have endeavoured to fix upon the Church of England; as if she had laid any Obligation upon her Sons, in Opposition to the Present Constitution. Whereas the Contrary Truth is Self-Evident. For does not our Church in her Sixth Article receive all the Books of the New Testament as they are commonly received, and account them Canonical? Is not my Text part of that Canon? And are not all our Bishops and Clergy thereby obliged, as much as *Tim* was, to put their Hearers in mind of their *Subjection to Princes* *in the Lord*? or can we pretend to be Members of an Apostolical Church if we carry our selves unseemly towards such a Government? whose Administration directly tends to our Common Good, and was also our own Ordinance and Appointment? which are the Apostolical Reasons of Civil Obedience.

I speak not this, as if by virtue of the Ministerial Function we could pretend to prescribe Forms of Civil Government to Nations to determine the Regalia of Princes, or the subordinate Powers of inferior Magistrates. The *Bibl* of God does not furnish us with Abilities for this work, much less require it of us: It enjoins us to make Peace among our Neighbours, by endeavouring to incline mens minds to a peaceable Temper; but it does not enable us to Judge the least Point of Legal Right which is in Controversie between them; much less does it teach us to determine the Rights, Titles or Powers of Princes and Magistrates, but yet it enjoins us to put Men in mind to be ready to every good



*A Sermon preach'd before the*  
 work, which may Contribute to support a Good  
 Government.

3dly, From the Doctrine already set  
 forth, in Conjunction with the Misfortunes  
 of that Sovereign Prince which are this  
 Day called to Remembrance, ariseth matter  
 of Caution to Two sorts of People.

First, To all those who have the Honour to  
 share the Publick Administration, that they  
 make it their Equal Care that the Govern-  
 ment which at present we enjoy may be al-  
 ways the ministry of God to us for good. For  
 such an Administration applies the Text in  
 the most sensible manner, convincing every  
 one that he ought to be subject to *Principalities*  
*and Powers*, to obey *Magistrates*, and to be ready  
 to every good Work.

It is well known that the Character of a  
 Good Prince is rais'd so high in the Holy  
 Scripture, that such are called Gods upon  
 Earth; so admonish them of that continual  
 overflowing Kindness, that universal Bene-  
 ficence, that tender Care and Concern for  
 their Peoples Welfare, which their High Of-  
 fice requires. And from the Scriptures we  
 are also informed, That the kind Providen-  
 ces of God are immediately conveyed to men  
 by his holy Angels, who are therefore called,  
*Ministring Spirits*, *Hebrews* 1. 14. and are  
 most especially employed in Works of Deli-  
 verance. By their means Lot was delivered  
 out of Sodom, Isaac from the Arm that was  
 stretch-



stretched forth to make him a Sacrifice, *Israel* was conducted through the Wilderness to *Canaan*, *Elijah* delivered from Famine, and at last carried from Earth to Heaven. By their means *Daniel* was delivered from the Lions, and the Three *Israelites* from the fiery Furnace. These were the Heralds who first Published the Redemption of the World by our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, who likewise delivered *Peter* from his Chains, *Paul* and *Silas* from their Imprisonment. Whereby a Pattern is set up to the Ministry of a Great and Good Prince; who are hereby directed to Cultivate and Adorn that Deliverance which their Great Master hath wrought out for his People.

*First*, By being the first Messengers and Promoters of those Methods which may for ever hereafter secure our Liberties from danger of Relapse.

*Secondly*, By a diligent avoiding of all those Methods by which the Glory of former Princes has been Eclipsed, and the Hearts of their People alienated from them.

The subordinate Ministry is the Visible Majesty of the King, whereby he is made known to his People, and more especially in time of Peace; For, tho during a War, the Personal Courage and Conduct of a Great Prince is made very Publick, whilst his Person is Exposed to the View of Multitudes;

24 *A Sermon preach'd before the*  
yet when Peace shall restore him to a more  
Private State of Life, his Personal Endow-  
ments, tho never so illustrious in themselves,  
cannot become visible to the Body of a Peo-  
ple any other way than by the constant Care  
and Conduct, the Great Diligence and Pub-  
lick Spirit of those to whom he hath com-  
mitted the Trust of his People's Welfare :  
The want of this Necessary Concern for  
Publick Good, did, in some measure, assist in  
bringing on that Tragical Scene, which is  
this Day Commemorated.

As 'tis commonly seen, that men in a Pri-  
vate Condition of Life are reduced to Great  
Miseries, by the male-administration of those  
to whom they had committed their private  
Trusts: But when a *Publick Ministry* shall  
join together Hearts and Hands, only to pro-  
mote the *Publick Weal*, without the least De-  
sign of warping the *Princes Favour* towards  
any one *Party of Men*, which like the Light  
of the Sun, and breathings of the Air, is  
designed for Common Comfort and Refresh-  
ment, no Jealousies, Fears or Disaffections can  
arise; 'twill then be impossible for the most  
wicked and malicious to disturb the *Publick*  
*Peace*, but the King's Throne will be *establisht*  
*in righteousness*, and the Voice of the People  
will be, *O King live for ever.*

*Secondly*, A Second Caution affects all those  
who are concerned for the Body of the Peo-  
ple, that they let slip no Opportunity where-  
in

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*in Publick Advantages are offered to them. The Supreme Magistrate is the greatest Minister of God to us for Good: But God himself is not wont to enforce His Kindness upon us; but expects our own Concurrence for our own behoof; and when a Gracious Prince shall make it appear, both by Words and Facts, that He cannot have any Separate Interest from that of His People; when He shews himself ready to every good Work which is esteemed Beneficial to His People, tho His Compliance therewith may be Complicated with some Circumstances of Self-Denial, 'twould be a matter of sad Reflection, if the Publick Weal should not be improv'd by the Advantages which so Good and Gracious an Inclination administers unto us. An unanimous Consent in any matter of publick Benefit will certainly procure it. To know what is good for us, is to attain it.*

There is also one rule which our Saviour Christ has left with us tending to the Improvement of Knowledge, which when reduced to Practice will suffer no man to be Ignorant of of what is good and fit to be done; 'tis only to carry a single Eye about us according to what is said *Matth. 6. 22. the light of the body is the Eye, if therefore thine Eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of Light.* If the Eye of a man be carried on singly (without any biasing Affection,) towards either Publick or Private good, he will certainly discover the good which he looked for. But if in the search af-  
ter

ter publick weal any Private By-Ends be aimed at, if a private love to our selves, or a particular Resentment against any Persons or Parties shall over-rule, if either the Admiration or Disesteem of others shall incline men to refuse Good Provisions, or embrace Suspicious Proposals, if any thing besides a sincere desire to promote the publick Weal, shall bear Sway in a Publick Council, 'tis no strange thing if Darknesse shall be called Light, and Light Darknesse.

It may also be observed, That amongst the many Qualifications which have recommended our Holy Religion, no one has more forced its way among serious and considering men than its being so admirably adapted to the Happiness of Mankind, and the Good of Society.

Unbelievers have denied its Miracles, and its Mysteries have been disputed and derided by Sceptical and Profane Men. But the greatest Opposers of the Christian Name can neither Deny nor Dispute the Royal Tendency of Meekness, Moderation, Punctual Justice, and Universal Good Will to make men live well one with another, doing to others as we would have them to do to us, and loving our very enemies, leave no room either for private Oppression or Publick Disturbance. The Spirit of this Religion will not suffer us to perpetrate Animosities, or carry on Suspensions too far: To think that men who have once been

been in the wrong, can never be convinced, never repent of their Errors; 'Twill suffer no Suspensions to hinder from a due Consideration of any Proposals in behalf of Publick Good, from whatever Quarter they may come: Where the Single Eye is thus directed in a Strait Line towards the Publick Weal, the whole Body of such a Council will be full of Light, whereby they will certainly discover the things which belong to our Peace. These things can never be hid when a Prince and People are thus in Quest of them.

God forbid therefore, That this Day of Solemn Humiliation should be made use of to flatter Princes with Notions of Arbitrary Power, by drawing any Conclusions from the Ancient Government of Gods peculiar People which may Colour over Modern Tyranny. God forbid, that the Roman Imperial Power in the hands of Claudius, or Nero, should be own'd as Gods Ministry, under which the Apostles of Christ suffered Martyrdom. To entertain People with the Melancholly Thoughts of Fetters and Chains, which when laid upon them by ill Princes, yet they must not endeavour to remove under Penalty of Eternal Damnation, tends only to exasperate Humane Nature, and make way for such another Day of Humiliation as that we are now Celebrating: Which, may Divine Goodness, for ever prevent! God forbid, that this day should be made use of to continue Heats and Animosities among us, which ought long since to have been buried in Oblivion. Especially



cially when the Tragical Scene of this Day, was not then the Act of the whole Nation, and few Spectators of it, scarce any Actors in it, are now remaining.

But since the Condition of the Greatest Men upon Earth is subject to such *Fatal Catastrophes*, as that was which this Day brings to mind. I cannot but Lament the unhappy Fate of those Princes who are born in Purple and bred in Luxury, incompas'd with Flatterers, and so intoxicated with the Gaudy Ornaments of Power, as to forget the end for which they were elevated, and made Gods upon Earth. They little consider that this Greatness is supported by the Inheritance of the Gentleman, the Hazard of the Merchant, and the Sweat of the Labourer; who readily Contribute out of their small Stock to support a Government they themselves have set up. Who are contented to part with their Natural Liberty to those who formerly (it may be) were their Equals, for their Common Good and Protection; which is the only end of Government. A due reflection hereon would make them first of all adore the Goodness of God whose Providence hath so distinguished them, and also love and cherish that Society of Men, who hath raised them to so high a Station, and submitted themselves and their Fortunes in a great measure, to their Discretion. Then the World would see the best Men in the highest Places, Senates in Authority, Magistrates in Esteem, and the Temple of Vertue the on-

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ly Passage to that of Honour. Ambition and  
Corruption will be out of Countenance, and  
the World will Triumph in an undisturbed  
Felicity. The Prince will be happy in the  
Reverence and Esteem of his People, and the  
People safe in the Generosity of the Prince.

All this and more we may expect from his  
Majesty's most Happy Reign, who was not  
(like others) nursed up in Flattery, but tasted  
early of the Cup of Affliction, that his Great-  
ness might be owing to his own Courage, Ver-  
tue and Integrity, and not the Uncertain Gift  
of Fortune. Wise by Nature, improv'd by  
Early Adversity, and consummated by long  
Experience in all the Paths of Greatness; a  
Prince Lov'd and Obey'd by his own Subjects;  
Honour'd by his Allies, Dreaded by his Enemies,  
and will be Admired by late Posterity.

Nor do I here insist upon his Great Perfor-  
mances in the Art of War, in which other  
Princes have had their share, and are often  
themselves the wretched Trophy's, erected up-  
on the Tears of miserable Men. But in his  
early Years, to restore his Native Country,  
and since that, the Liberties of Three most  
Potent Nations, are Glories peculiar to him-  
self, and cannot be Equall'd by the Exploits  
of the most Renowned Chiefs; either of the  
*Assyrian, Grecian, or Roman* Monarchs. And  
to Consummate all the Felicity that can hap-  
pen to Mortal-Man, it hath been a Particular  
Honour reserv'd by Providence for him alone,  
that

that as where-ever he sets his Foot, Slavery fled before him like a Phantome, so in His Dominions and under His Protection, are almost all the remains of Liberty now known in the World.

Not that I speak this, or any thing else I have here said, for your Information, (for I know from what honourable Assembly I ought to receive Instruction) but as my Text directed me for your Remembrance.

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*FINIS.*

